

NUTRITION PROGRAM FACTS: FOOD STAMP NUTRITION EDUCATION

US Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Food Stamp Program

As the cornerstone of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) nutrition assistance programs, the Food Stamp Program (FSP) plays a vital role in helping to improve nutrition in the Nation, particularly among low-income individuals.



During Fiscal Year 2002, an average of 19 million people living in 8.2 million households received food stamps in the United States.

- 51% children
- 40% adults
- 9% elderly (60 years and older).

Encouraging Healthy Food Choices

Under current regulations (7 CFR 272.2), States have the option of providing nutrition education to food stamp recipients as part of their program operations. While optional, USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) actively encourages States to provide nutrition education for food stamp participants and eligibles.

The goal of Food Stamp Nutrition Education is to provide educational programs that increase, within a limited budget, the likelihood of all food stamp recipients making healthy food choices and choosing active lifestyles consistent with the most recent advice reflected in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the Food Guide Pyramid.

State Food Stamp Nutrition Education Plans

- Participating State agencies submit an annual Nutrition Education Plan to FNS. This Plan outlines the State's activities and budget for the following year.
- USDA reimburses the State for 50% of the allowable administrative costs deemed reasonable and necessary to operate Food Stamp Nutrition Education activities.
- The number of State agencies with approved Nutrition Education Plans increased from 7 in 1992 to 50 State agencies in 2003 (Figure A).
- Federal funds approved for Food Stamp Nutrition Education also grew from \$661,000 in 1992 to over \$192 million in 2003. This amount represents half of States' total

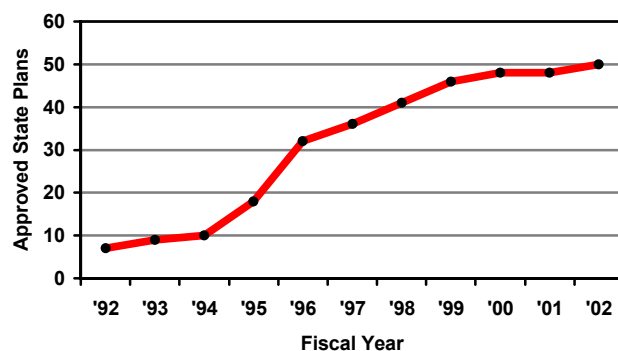


Figure A. The number of State agencies with an approved plan for Food Stamp Nutrition Education by Fiscal Year.

approved funds for Food Stamp Nutrition Education.



State Guidance

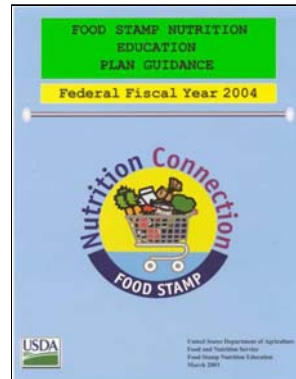
FNS provides guidance to States that encourages the use of the most effective nutrition education tools and strategies available. The guidance also helps States develop a clear, comprehensive document for implementing their State plan.

FNS requires States to focus on the following core elements when assessing needs, developing objectives and outcomes:

- Food Security
- Food Safety
- Dietary Quality
- Food Resource Management/Shopping Behaviors

In particular, FNS encourages interventions in the above areas that focus on:

- fruit and vegetable consumption among low-



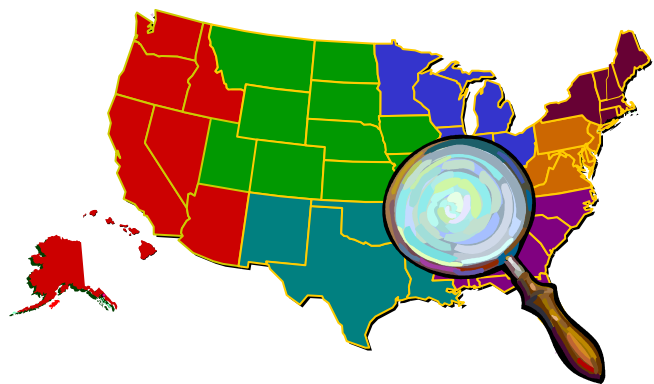
*A copy of the Plan Guidance is available online at:
www.nal.usda.gov/foodstamp/*

- income groups;
- interventions and activities that promote a healthy weight;
- partnerships and collaborations that include other FNS programs in the planning and delivery of nutrition education;
- and activities that take place in the Food Stamp Program office.

In Your Community

States provide a variety of Food Stamp Nutrition Education initiatives and target Food Stamp Program participants of all ages. Activities range from social marketing campaigns to the provision of a comprehensive curriculum of nutrition education classes.

The Cooperative Extension System (CES) is the predominant State sponsoring agency that is contracted to provide Food Stamp Nutrition Education. However, state nutrition education networks, public health departments, welfare agencies and other university academic centers are also sponsoring agencies.



Contact your local Food Stamp Program office for information on Food Stamp Nutrition Education activities in your area. Links to the Web sites of State Food Stamp Nutrition Education providers are available on the Food Stamp Nutrition Connection Web site at:
www.nal.usda.gov/foodstamp/Stategates/index.html